

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MCT-01 SY-05 USSS-00 COME-00 ACDA-12
EB-08 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05 IO-13 A-01 OPR-02 CA-01
/098 W

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O R 111640Z MAY 78
FM AMCONSUL MILAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5983
AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L MILAN 0724

EO: 11652: GDS
TAGS:
SUBJECT: TERRORISTS SHOOT ITALIAN HEAD OF US BANK

1. MARZIO ASTARITA, MILAN-BASED HEAD OF CHEMICAL BANK IN ITALY, WAS SHOT IN LEG LEAVING HIS HOME AT 0750 OF MAY 11 BY TWO MEN AND ONE WOMAN WHO THEN ESCAPED. THIS IS FOURTH MILAN POLITICAL SHOOTING IN PAST WEEK. HIS CONDITION NOT GRAVE BUT HE WENT IMMEDIATELY INTO SURGERY AND IS EXPECTED TO REQUIRE MONTH'S HOSPITALIZATION. CREDIT FOR ATTACK WAS ASSUMED BY PRIMA LINEA (FRONT LINA) WHICH CALLER SAID WAS PART OF COMBATTENTI COMUNISTI. POLICE ASSURE US THAT SEARCH FOR ATTACKER'S IN PROGRESS BUT EXPECT LITTLE RESULT.

2. ASTARITA IS FIRST HEAD OF AMERICAN MULTINATIONAL IN ITALY TO BE SO TARGETED AS FAR AS WE KNOW ALTHOUGH OTHER MULTINATIONALS HAVE HAD OFFICES ATTACKED.

3. ASTARITA, ONLY 37, IS WELL KNOWN TO CONSULATE BUT NOT TO GENERAL PUBLIC. HE TOOK OVER TOP JOB AT BANK ONLY RECENTLY FROM SENIOR COLLEAGUE. ASTARITA'S DEPUTY
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TOLD US BY PHONE THAT LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS AT ONE-HUNDRED EMPLOYEE BANK EXCELLENT AND THAT POSSIBILITY OF INVOLVEMENT BY BANK EMPLOYEES OUT OF QUESTION.

4. CREDIT FOR ATTACK, ACCORDING TO POLICE, CLAIMED BY PRIMA LINEA, ONE OF NUMBER OF VIOLENT TERRORISTS GROUPS PRESENTLY AT LARGE IN ITALY.

5. HOME OFFICE UP COLLINS CALLED FROM CHICAGO AND WE PROVIDED ABOVE DETAILS. HIS REACTION WAS BALANCED AND HE APPEARED INFORMED ABOUT GENERAL POLITICAL CLIMATE.

6. FIRST, REACTIONS OF AMERICAN EXECUTIVES IN MILAN WAS MIXTURE OF CONCERN AND RESIGNATION. AMERICAN HEAD OF MILAN BRANCH OF ANOTHER US BANK TOLD US HE WOULD NOT ONLY HAVE TO BEEF UP HIS OWN PERSONAL SECURITY PRECAUTIONS BUT WAS RETHINKING PLANNED MOVE INTO NEW BUILDING THAT WOULD MAKE BANK MORE VISIBLE. TWO OTHERS HOWEVER CLAIMED TO SEE LITTLE THAT WAS NEW IN THIS MOST RECENT ATTACK AND CLAIMED THEY INTENDED TO TAKE NO NEW SECURITY MEASURES. AMERICAN CHAMBER HAD NOT YET HAD TIME TO GATHER REACTIONS OF ITS MEMBERSHIP. BUT PRESIDENT MAKES NO SECRET OF HIS IMPATIENCE TO RETURN TO US.

7. WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE ON REASONS WHY ASTARITA TARGETTED. MOST OBVIOUS POSSIBILITY IS HIS BANK'S MULTINATIONAL CHARACTER, GIVEN RECENT TERRORISTS PRONOUNCEMENTS ON ALLEGED EVILS OF MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES. GETTING MORE SPECIFIC, CHEMICAL BANK HAS HIGHER PROFILE HERE THAN OTHER U.S. BANKS IN FORM OF HUGESIGN OVER PIAZZA NEAR CITY CENTER WHERE YOUTHS HABITUALLY MILL ABOUT. MOST OTHER US BANKS ARE DISCREET ALMOST TO POINT OF INVISIBILITY.

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8. WHATEVER THE REASON, EFFECT HERE IS TO ENHANCE TERRORISTS' REPUTATION AS CAPABLE OF ANYTHING THEY DARE, AND TO MOVE AMERICAN EXECUTIVES CLOSER THAN THEY HAVE EVER BEEN TO TARGET AREA AND TO HEIGHTEN OUR OWN CONCERN ABOUT SECURITY OF CONSULATE PERSONNEL.FINA

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